



Northampton Unitarians News

*A spiritual fellowship, encouraging tolerance,
reason and independent thought*

Issue 50, October - December 2015

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Statement of Belief (taken from our website)

Unitarianism is a religious movement in which individuals are free to follow their reason and conscience; there is no pressure from creed or scripture. We are open to change in the light of new thought and discoveries.

We believe that:

- everyone has the right to seek truth and meaning for themselves.
- the fundamental tools for doing this are your own life experience, your reflection upon it, your intuitive understanding and the promptings of your own conscience.
- the best place to do this is a community that welcomes you for who you are, complete with your beliefs, doubts and questions.

We offer:

- liberty of conscience and freedom from imposed creed, confessions and dogmas.
- a fellowship where people come together to worship; to share times of celebration and trial; and to help each other in the quest for a faith to live by.

We affirm the universal values of love and compassion, peace, truth and justice.

We welcome all who come to us in the spirit of goodwill and enquiry, regardless of ethnic or religious background, age, gender or sexual orientation.

Our thanks to the General Assembly Information Department, for extracts from 'A faith worth thinking about' by Peter Sampson et al; and to Ipswich Unitarians for extracts from a leaflet by Rev. Cliff Reed.

Calendar for October - December 2015

October

Sunday 11th Worship service, led by Rev. Sue Woolley
Thurs. 15th Building Your Own Theology, session postponed
Sunday 25th Worship service, led by Mr. Jon Small

November

Sunday 8th Worship service, led by Rev. Sue Woolley
Thurs. 19th Building Your Own Theology, session postponed
Sunday 22nd Worship service, led by Mr. Simon Hall

December

Sunday 13th Worship Service, led by Rev. Sue Woolley
Thurs. 17th Building Your Own Theology, Session 7
Ethics: The Importance Of Being Good For Nothing
Sunday 20th* Congregational Carol Service

***note that this service is on 3rd Sunday instead of 4th**

*All Worship Services are held at
31, Hazelwood Road, and start at 10.30 am*

ALL ARE WELCOME!

*All Building Your Own Theology sessions are held at
31, Hazelwood Road, and start at 7.30 pm*

*The Group is now closed
(no new people will be admitted)
for the sake of trust & confidentiality*



Our Newsletter is 50!

At the end of June 2003, more than 12 years ago, the very first issue of our *Northampton Unitarians News* was published. It was a single sheet of A4, printed in two columns on both sides. I have been its editor for all but one issue, and it has been a source of quiet satisfaction to me to produce it once a quarter, and to know that we are communicating, not only with each other, but with the wider world.

Our then Chair of Congregation, Fiona Boyle, commented "If you have got anything to say or find something that may be of interest to others then please get in contact with Sue. I know it is getting very clichéd to say this, but, yes, here it comes: **"Newsletters only work if people actually provide contributions"**. And I am quite sure Sue will be chasing you all in advance of the next one! **[some things have not changed - Ed.]** Very soon, the Newsletters will also be made available on our next new 'big thing', our new website, which is in the process of just being finalised. We will be publicising the website further once it has been completed. Thanks go to Sue for organising both the Newsletter and the website." The website went live in July 2003, and has been our gateway to and from the outside world, ever since.

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## Moving by Jon Small

Almost since we moved into our current premises at Hazelwood Road, we have been trying to find somewhere else. There have been moments of excitement and disappointment, such as when the Christian Science building came on the market and we missed it, but now we have good news!

Viridian House has been on the market for a while. This building was originally built for the Girl Guides and called Trefoil House. It is located on the east side of Horsemarket, near the junction with Gold Street, more or less opposite St Mary's Street.

It is perfect for our needs and already has all the facilities we need (except for a disabled toilet – it will be easy to alter one of the existing ones).

We have bid for it; Sandy Ellis has realised some of our assets and the MUA is giving us a bridging loan until we have sold our property in Hazelwood Road. I understand there is already some interest in it.

After all this time I am not sure I really believe this is happening! I know that it is early days yet, and there is the whole conveyancing process to be gone through, but if all goes well, we should be starting 2016 in our new home, which is very exciting indeed.

I think particular thanks should go to Sandy Ellis, Sue Woolley, Simon Hall and Mark Beaumont for all the effort they have put into achieving this result.

**Jon Small**

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Finding the Courage by Sue Woolley

There are times in everyone's life when we feel scared, not brave enough, and want to run away and hide, from whatever situation we find ourselves in. It is certainly true of me.

Recently, a friend of mine posted a lovely reflection on Facebook, which got me thinking about what courage is, and where it might

be found. He wrote: "The special form of lovely when the result of someone believing in you, when you yourself didn't, helps you to find courage you didn't know you had."

My *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines courage as "bravery, boldness" - for me this implies some form of heroism and derring-do. Like facing down a mountain lion or some other daring deed. The sort of thing that James Bond might do, as a matter of routine.

But I believe with my friend that courage can be found in some very unlikely places. In her wonderful book *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Brené Brown explains that "Courage originally meant 'to speak one's mind by telling all one's heart.' ... Speaking honestly and openly about who we are, about what we're feeling, and about our experiences (good and bad) is the definition of courage ... Ordinary courage is about putting our *vulnerability* on the line. In today's world, that is pretty extraordinary."

"Ordinary courage is about putting our vulnerability on the line." It's about being brave enough to reach out for help; to admit that actually, we don't know; that we aren't ready for this yet; or that we're feeling rubbish. It is also about feeling the fear and doing it anyway, to quote a book title by Susan Jeffers. It can be about taking that first vital step on a new path, about moving out of your comfort zone and into the unknown. This kind of courage is the quiet sort of everyday courage, and if you start looking for it, you'll find it everywhere.

The lovely thing is, if we can be brave enough to "speak our minds by telling all our hearts", this will often be met with empathy, understanding, and support. Even perhaps relief - because sometimes when we share that we're feeling scared or inadequate in some way, it allows other people to admit their own vulnerability too.

Regional Events

**Midland Unitarian Association of Lay Preachers
And Service Leaders: Autumn Training
Ministering to Our Communities: Part One**

Led by: Diane Rutter, Nicky Jenkins and Kate McKenna

When: Saturday 10th October 2015

Where: Unitarian New Meeting House, Ryland Street,
Birmingham B16 8BL

Time: 10.00 am – 4.15 pm (coffee/tea available from 9.30 am)

Cost: Free to MUA delegates



Midland Unitarian Association Annual Lunch

When: Saturday 31st October 2015

Where: Kingswood Meeting House, Packhorse Lane,
Hollywood Worcs. B47 5DQ

Time: 10.30 am for 11.00 am

Guest Speaker: Rev. Winnie Gordon, Minister of Unitarian New
Meeting, Birmingham and New Meeting, Kidderminster

Cost: £10.00 a head

More details about these events from Sue Woolley (see p.8)

Northampton Unitarians

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Chalice lighting words for the refugee crisis by Andy Pakula

We have come together here today,
Each with our own joys and strengths
Each wrestling with our own struggles and woes
We come together in one of the world's wealthiest and safest
countries - a place where diversity is usually tolerated and often
celebrated.
A place where tragic violence is notable by its scarcity
Many in the world dream of living as we do;
They dream of being able to live in peace and raise their children
with opportunity and in safety
These members of our own human family cry out to us
May the fire of compassion burn bright in all our hearts
May our minds engage positively and productively with the needs
of our sisters and brothers everywhere
And may our hands reach out to them, ready to make a
difference.

**Northampton Unitarians are pleased to have donated £250 to
the Clara Barton Appeal of the Red Cross.**